

# The South Danvers Observer

The South Danvers Observer is published quarterly.

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Published by the  
Peabody Institute Library

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Spring 1915—The sport of Baseball has long been played in our town. It was played when our nation fought for its freedom 140 years ago. It was played when we fought yet again for our rights 20 years later. And it was played before we fought in the Civil War.

When Massachusetts formed the Association of Base Ball Players in 1858, our town wasted no time in organizing, not one but, **two** Baseball teams. South Peabody had the Rockvilles and there was also the *South Danvers Benicia Club*. Both teams played a number of area towns, including Salem and Lynn.

Their matches were nothing like the game known as Baseball today. The ball used was much smaller, closer to the size of a golf ball than a baseball. And the bat resembled nothing so much as a broomstick. Instead of 9 players, there were 12 men on a team.

The rules of the game were more like Round Ball more than what we now call Baseball. Bases were only 30 feet away from each other. There was no foul territory and 45 innings for a game was not unusual.

In fact, the most innings ever recorded in a Massachusetts game happened when the town of Medway's team defeated Upton's team in 211 innings, with a score of 100 to 78.

There was never a score like that in South Danvers but when

## "In Good Style"



the *Bencias* played the Lynn *Outalanchets* on September 1, 1860, the game last 4 hours, had 45 innings and a score of 76 to 31, with South Danvers winning that match.

When the Civil War began, 8 of the 12 men on the *Benicias* volunteered for the Army and several men on the *Rockvilles* also served, thus ending the game of Baseball in our town during those years.

What didn't end was Peabody's love for the game. After that horrific war ended, our citizens were grateful to turn their passions, once more, to the simple pleasure of Baseball.

"We've met again in friendly strife,  
Old Danvers against Lynn,  
Resolved to do the best we could,  
And let the best man win.  
Kind friends, 't is pleasant thus to meet,  
In a good-natured tussle,  
It helps us to digest our grub,  
And shows our 'pluck and muscle,' . . .

But now and then a friendly game,  
We see fit to enjoy;  
The last was between 'Champion Tom,'  
And our 'Benicia Boy,'  
The Boy was game, and wears the belt—  
He is the wreath of Fame;  
Long may the godly Club exist  
That bears his gallant name. . . ."

*"The playing for the first hour was very closely contested, neither club making ten tallies, but soon the Benicia Club began to lead in good style, and maintained their advantage to the end of the game."*

*From the Sept. 12, 1860  
South Danvers Wizard*

*From the Sept. 19, 1860  
South Danvers Wizard*

# Samuel Warren King Peabody's First Major League Player

After the Civil War ended, Baseball once again flourished in Peabody. Enthusiasm for the game rose with every passing year. There were many fine players from our town, but one of the best in the late 1860s and through the 1880s was Samuel Warren King.

Sam had the distinct honor of being only one of seven who graduated from Peabody High School in 1870 and the only boy. It is a wonderful comment on both his and his parents' commitment to his education.

There was no High School team then, but that never diminished Sam's

love of the game. He was a talented player and excelled at the first base position. His prowess in the game drew attention from many places.

When Harry Wright came to Boston to manage the Boston Red Stockings (later the Red Sox), word reached him of Sam King. Wright offered Sam a position on the newly formed team and though Sam longed to accept, his parents' didn't believe it to be a good opportunity for their son.

No doubt, Sam was disappointed but he stayed in Peabody. Just what Sam could have offered the Red Stockings we'll never know. But Sam continued to play. He joined the Lynn Live

Oaks, a semi-professional team with which he played for many years. And at the grand old age of 31, Sam was offered another chance to play for a major league team.

In 1884, the Washington Nationals offered Sam a position on their team. He played one year for them before retiring from professional sports.

In the days Sam King played the sport, no gloves were worn by the players and he received no special training. He was a true natural.

Sam lives in Peabody still, running his real estate business from his home on Lowell Street.

"Mr. Samuel W. King was in town yesterday. A special dispatch to the Boston Herald, yesterday, said of the base ball club, the Washingtons, of which he is a member, 'during the last week the club has greatly strengthened their nine by the addition of four prominent New England players, viz.: Gardner, of Danvers, Mass., as catcher; Kiler, from Beverly, Mass., as centre fielder; King, from Peabody, as first baseman, and Kelly, from Fall River, as left fielder.'"

From the May 7, 1884 Peabody Press

*"Interest in the North Shore League has increased wonderfully the past few weeks and by the time the schedule is opened, May 30, it will be at fever heat. The league is made up of but four clubs, the St. Johns and Father Mathews of Peabody, Danvers A. A., and Young Men's of Marblehead. Danvers has defeated Melrose and Woburn this season and a team capable of giving the Peabody clubs a good argument has been gathered by Manager O'Brien."*

From the April 27, 1905

*"Peabody fans have gone wild over the St. John's team and claim that it is the fastest Semi-Professional Club in the League. . . The John P. Squire nine of Boston came to Peabody last Saturday afternoon . . . but when the team left, they had lost their reputation and another victory was added to the unbroken string of the home team, for in the most interesting contest of the season, the Squire nine was defeated 16 to 1. The effective pitching of James and O'Brien, who were in the box for the home team was responsible for the victory and not a semblance of a safe hit was made on James, while but one safety was secured off O'Brien, who pitched the last two innings."*

From the May 25, 1905

## Lloyd Garrison "Chick" Davies

Baseball fever in our town has reached new heights. And the reason, of course, is Lloyd "Chick" Davies.

Lloyd is the youngest son of Thomas and the late Hattie Leighton Davies. Of their six children, only four now live. An infant brother died at birth and Lloyd's older brother, Harlan, died of appendicitis at the age of 11. His mother, Hattie Leighton Davies was taken by typhoid fever when Lloyd was only five years old. Three sisters remain, Basil, Eva and Ida.

As talented as "Chick" is, he is not the first member of his family to excel at the sport. His cousin, John Atkinson Leighton, also played. Although he never rose to the same heights as Chick, he played semi-professional ball for the Syracuse Stars in 1890.

Chick began to show his promise in High School. Who doesn't remember the excitement when Davies led our High School nine onto the championship in the North Shore League in 1910.

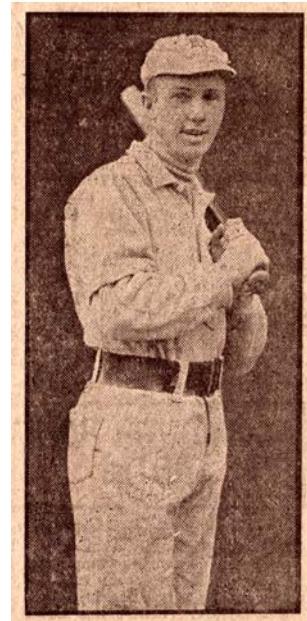
After his graduation that year, Davies went on to the

Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst where he majored in chemistry. While there, he continued to demonstrate his prowess, both as a left-handed pitcher and batter. He played both Class and Varsity Baseball his first two years in College. He was also on the track team and played football, as well as basketball.

In 1912, two years before he graduated from college with a degree in chemistry, he was recruited by Connie Mack of the Philadelphia Athletics. He made his debut with the Athletics in Boston on September 3, 1914.

Hundreds of Peabody fans poured into Fenway Park for "Chick Davies Day." Among those fans were his father, his grandmother who raised Chick and his sisters after his mother's death and his fiancé, Marian Shaw of Holten Street, Peabody.

Since then, Davies has braved a frightening attack of appendicitis, which claimed his brother's life. Davies survived the surgery and is on the rebound. We all look forward to another exciting year as he continues his career with the



Chick Davies in his uniform for the Philadelphia Athletics

"The baseball situation in Peabody just at present seems to be in an unsettled condition, and it will probably be a couple weeks before definite arrangements for the season can be announced, and it is not yet a definite fact that any baseball will be played in town this year. . . President Russell of the Essex Agricultural Society has sent. . . an ultimatum that it will be necessary to erect 189 feet of board fence, eight feet high, at once or there will be no base ball on the society's grounds this year. . . We must have baseball in Peabody sure. We all want to cheer for our home club, and with even better luck than the Boston Americans are now getting."

From the April 27, 1905

"Homer Lanctot, a Peabody boy, has been signed by manager Leonard of the Lynn Association club and will play shortstop for them Friday and Saturday of this week against the Murray Hill Club of New York. . ."

From the June 1, 1905  
Peabody Free Press

"The young ladies who trudged to Salem and back with the boys on Monday night say the blisters on their feet don't hurt one bit, and if only the Chelsea team will give the Peabody team a chance to wallop them back, they will walk to Chelsea and back."

From the June 2, 1910  
Peabody Progress

## From Near and Far



"While Lloyd "Chick" Davies failed to knock out any home runs or might clouts in any of his five times at bat against the Red Sox pitchers yesterday at Fenway Park, he proved beyond any question that he is big league stuff and that the world's greatest baseball general made no mistake in adding him to the fold of the Philadelphia Athletics.

The big thing that Chick showed the 1,000 local fans was that he possessed the nerve that keeps ball players up in the big show and all that he needs is a little more seasoning and experience."

From the Sept. 4, 1914  
Peabody Enterprise

"The Peabody High School base ball nine met the Beverly High School nine on Wednesday and victory crowned their efforts. The score was 21 to 13. They play the Gloucester High School team next week."

From the July 4, 1891  
Peabody Press

"A large crowd gathered at square field Thursday afternoon to see the high school nine warm the Beacons of Gloucester, but the 'Lower Lights' were not burning. Today the Peabody boys go to Rockport."

From the August 15, 1891  
Peabody Press

"The High School base ball team played a game Wednesday with the United Stars. In the middle of the ninth inning the score was an even 15 to 15. The High School captain put in a new pitcher and the Stars refused to complete the game. The Umpire declared the withdraw a forfeiture."

From the July 11, 1891  
Peabody Press

"Chick's real test came in the ninth inning of the second game when with two men on the bases and two down, the Peabody idol got Joe Wood in the hole with three balls and two strikes, the third ball being called after Chick had swung at a breast fling. It looked as if Davies would either get a safe clout or draw a pass and the Essex county delegation offered a silent prayer on his behalf. It were useless [sic] for Chick swung at another high ball and the Red Sox had taken a brace of victories from the World's champions."

From the Sept. 4, 1914  
Peabody Enterprise